

# Travellers: We don't want brick-built home

By JON AUSTIN

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**BASILDON** Council is gearing up for another legal showdown with travellers facing eviction from Dale Farm.

A family from the Crays Hill site has launched a civil action against the type of alternative housing the council has offered them.

John and Barbara Sheridan, and their children, were offered temporary council housing in the event they are evicted from the site alongside 85 other families.

Yet the couple will argue at Basildon County Court on

- ❑ Council homes offered after eviction
- ❑ Families object to permanent homes

September 16, that the offer of traditional bricks and mortar housing goes against their nomadic culture and the council should find them an alternative caravan site.

The legal tussle is expected to mark the start of a wave of legal challenges from at least 11 other families at the site and from Hovefields, Wickford, who have been offered traditional housing by the council. Campaigners

hope the challenges will further delay the council's evictions, which will cost up to £2.5million.

Grattan Puxon, lead traveller campaigner, said: "This will be the first of a number of challenges. The council gave an undertaking to the Court of Appeal it would abide with homelessness legislation.

"We feel it would go against this to evict before these cases are heard."

Council leader Tony Ball said: "We expect there to be a number of similar cases, because anyone can challenge a council's offer of housing at county court."

However, he does not believe

the court action will upset the eviction plan.

He said: "We would be able to evict, because legally the eviction and the court case are two separate issues."

Mrs Sheridan, the sister of site spokesman Richard Sheridan, moved from conventional housing to set up home illegally at Dale Farm. She was on the electoral register as living with her parents at a council home in Wolverhampton in 2001 and 2002.

Several of the travellers have said they previously tried to live in houses, but had to return to mobile homes due to problems with depression.

## Men in court over cable

● TWO men accused of stealing £5,000 worth of copper cable have appeared in court.

Jason Stone, 27, and Luke Crickmar, 20, are alleged to have stolen the copper cable from Tarmac Top Block, in Buckingham Hill Road, Linford.

The pair also faced a charge of possessing a lock knife in public.

Stone, of Godman Road, Grays and Crickmar, of Sabina Road, Grays, did not enter a plea to the charges.

They were both released on unconditional bail until July 30.

## Cannabis plant denial

● A MAN has denied growing cannabis. Kevin Keeble, 49 is alleged to have grown the Class B drugs in Grays, on December 21, last year.

Keeble, of Cardinal Road, Grays, denied producing a controlled drug when he appeared at Basildon Magistrates' Court.

He was released on unconditional bail until July 23.

## Bag thief is

## HOSPICE CELEBRATES ONE YEAR OF FUNDRAISING LOTTERY

**ST LUKE'S** Hospice is calling for a lotto support as it marks the first anniversary of one of its fundraising schemes.

It was almost a year ago that the Basildon-based hospice launched its own weekly lottery.

The draw, which costs £1 a week, is held every Friday and offers the chance to win a top prize of £1,500 every week, together with other

